

## Yaupon

*Ilex vomitoria*

### Secondary Names:

Yaupon Holly

**Leaf Type:** Evergreen

**Texas Native:**  Yes  No

**Firewise:**  Yes  No



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### Tree Description:

A thicket-forming shrub or small, multi-trunked tree to 25 feet tall and stems up to 6" in diameter, with a dense, conical or rounded crown of dark green foliage.

### Range/Site Description:

Common on the fertile, moist soils of East Texas bottomlands, but also south to Matagorda Bay and west to the edge of the Edwards Plateau.

### Leaf:

Simple, alternate, 1" to 2" long by 0.5" to 1" wide, oval, leathery, with blunt teeth along the margin. Leaves are glossy and dark green above, paler below, evergreen, and persistent for 2 to 3 years.

### Flower:

Small, whitish, not showy; male and female flowers are borne on separate plants.

### Fruit:

A red, translucent, berry-like drupe, about 0.25" in diameter, on a short stalk, ripening in late fall and often produced in great abundance by the female plants.

### Bark:

Light gray, smooth or leathery, sometimes developing thin scales and blotches on larger stems.

### Wood:

Wood is of little commercial value except for fuel; plants are commonly sold in the nursery trade as a landscape specimen.

### Similar Species:

Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) has opposite leaves and a spike of small, blue fruits.

### Interesting Facts:

Yaupon leaves contains a small amount of caffeine and can be steeped into a weak tea. They also have been used ceremonially by native Americans as a purgative called the "Black Drink," thus providing the source for the Latin species name, 'vomitoria.' The berries are favored by several bird species.